



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### PRESS RELEASE

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### CT Grown Christmas Trees Part of Holiday Tradition

**Hartford, CT/November 21, 2006** –What says “Christmas” more than the fragrance of a fresh-cut Christmas tree? Just about nothing, agree the masses who head out in search of the perfect tree as soon as the last bite of Thanksgiving dinner has been eaten. In fact, about half a million fresh trees are sold in Connecticut alone at this time each year.

For some, the quest is all about tradition.

“It’s a delightful experience to choose a live tree and part of the tradition of Christmas,” said Dr. John Ahrens, Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station Plant Scientist Emeritus, who has dedicated his life to research on various aspects of Christmas tree culture.

It is a tradition that dates back at least 500 years. The first record of a decorated evergreen used at Christmastime is from Riga, Latvia, in 1510, a Germanic region of Europe. It is thought that the Germans adopted the use of evergreens to celebrate life during the winter solstice from the Romans.

Searching for a tree also tends to be a revered family activity and is an opportunity to enjoy precious time with loved ones. Many families make the activity part of their annual Thanksgiving weekend plans.

Regardless of species – local favorites include Balsam, Fraser, and Douglas Fir; White and Blue Spuce; and White Pine – experts agree that choosing a fresh tree and caring for it correctly are essential to its enjoyment throughout the holiday season.

The freshest trees have been grown locally. Cutting your own at a Connecticut Christmas tree farm further ensures that your tree is as fresh as can be.

“We’ve had an excellent growing season,” remarked Kathy Kogut, Executive Director of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association. “The trees are looking awesome,” she said, thanks to the abundant rainfall the state received throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

Fresh, well-cared-for trees will not dry out or drop needles. They will maintain their color and fragrance for weeks, providing that a fresh cut is made before placing the trunk in the stand, and providing the water reservoir is never allowed to run dry.

Fresh-cut Connecticut Grown Christmas trees also offer numerous other benefits.

They add oxygen to the environment, remove carbon dioxide, and help keep the air and soil cool. According to Ms. Kogut, a single acre of tree production supplies enough oxygen for 18 people. Connecticut grows over 5000 acres of Christmas trees, supplying the oxygen needs for around 100,000 residents.

Christmas tree farming also keeps local workers employed and helps fuel the local economy. The sales of Connecticut’s Christmas trees add up to about \$20 million each year, the vast majority of which stays right here in the state. (In contrast, most artificial trees are manufactured overseas, primarily in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China.)

Moreover, real trees are renewable. Two to three seedlings are planted for every Christmas tree cut. Real trees also are completely biodegradable, and they provide an ideal habitat to many species of wildlife, both before and after they have been enjoyed by humans.

“Connecticut’s Christmas tree growers make a great contribution to the state,” says Dr. Ahrens. “They utilize land not suited for food crops and they add to the quality of life here in Connecticut.”

For more information about where to buy fresh Connecticut Grown trees, visit [CT.gov/CTGrown](http://CT.gov/CTGrown) and click on “Publications.”

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